

if it's good, or if it's fortune by Lake (beyond_belief)

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Summary:

Ben assists Eddie in cleaning up after Bowers puts the knife through his cheek.

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Author's Note:

Somehow "I would read fic where Ben helps Eddie get cleaned up after the face-stabbing" turned into "write the face bandaging plus semi-dubiously consensual handjobs", IDK.

Title from MGMT's "Future Reflections".

"Bowers is gone," Ben says, nearly skidding in the blood smeared on the hardwood floor as he rounds the door of Eddie's room. Eddie and Bev are still in the hall; Eddie pale and blood-covered, Bev with her eyes on the stab wound in his cheek, a worried expression flickering over her face as she tries to stop it bleeding. "Here, buddy, let me -" Ben says, kneeling down next to Eddie and pressing the towel carefully but firmly against the side of his face.

"How bad..." Eddie starts, and stops when more blood drips from his mouth. His eyes widen further.

"Maybe don't talk," Bev suggests hurriedly. "You're covered in something that's not blood but - you know what, I don't think I want to ask."

Ben looks around Eddie to meet her gaze. "I'll help him get cleaned up, Bev, if you can find someone working in this place to mop up the floor."

"Okay." She gets up carefully, and Ben puts his arm around Eddie's waist and helps him from the floor.

"C'mon, Eds, I got you. We'll get you cleaned up, patched up, good as new."

Eddie makes a somewhat distressed sound, but doesn't try to talk. He leans heavily against Ben. Instead of going back into Eddie's room with the blood everywhere and the broken window, Ben steers them toward his room in the opposite corner.

"Come on, into the bathroom here... all right." He steers Eddie to sit down on the toilet. "You're not going to pass out on me, are you?"

Eddie shakes his head.

"Okay." Ben looks around, wondering what to do first, then grabs a couple of the washcloths off the rack. "Okay. I'm going to wash your face first, then we'll get some of those butterfly bandage things over that cut so you can shower without it being all... yeah. If it really looks like you need stitches, I can do that - spent enough time working construction that I picked up some useful first aid. But we'll start small, and only work up to that if we have to. Sound good?"

Eddie nods. Ben wets one of the washcloths while Eddie keeps the bloody towel pressed to the wound. Eddie closes his eyes, and Ben gently wipes off the rest of his face before taking Eddie's hand away, tossing the gross towel away from them into a corner, and cleaning up around the stab wound. It's barely bleeding now - *at least it's just a flesh wound*, Ben thinks to himself, trying to stay calm about it. Bowers could have gotten any number of worse places, gotten an artery or an organ, or just fucking gone for it and slit Eddie's throat.

Ben keeps his face as relaxed as possible, aware that Eddie's watching him, while really he what wants to do is scream.

"I don't think I need to stitch it," he says, pressing a clean washcloth to the wound. "But definitely the butterfly bandages, okay? I'm going to go find a first aid kit. Just sit tight."

Eddie grabs his wrist, surprisingly hard. "Don't leave me in here alone."

Ben pushes Eddie's hair back from his face and meets his worried gaze. "No one is hiding in here. You'll be fine. Bev's right outside in the hall. I'm just going to go to your room and get the kit I know you must have packed."

Eddie nods. "I did. Pack one. Even with the little sutures kit."

"I'll be right back," Ben promises.

Bev is indeed in the hallway, mopping. "I couldn't find a single

employee in this fucking place," she says, "but I did find the maintenance closet."

"This is the strangest damn hotel, but then again..."

Bev nods. Ben goes into Eddie's room and finds his meticulously packed toiletries bag, complete with a clearly marked first aid kit in a soft-covered pouch. From Eddie's suitcases, he grabs a clean shirt, jeans, and pair of boxers. The stuff he's wearing now is probably unsalvageable, whatever that slime is.

"Shout if any of the others come back," he says to Bev on his way back.

Eddie's still sitting on the toilet and looking like he hasn't moved an inch. Ben puts the clothes over the towel rack, then unzips the first aid kit on the edge of the sink. "Shit, this is comprehensive," he mutters, mostly to himself.

"I always bring it on trips. You never know." Eddie's laugh is a strangled sound. "Fuck. Sure didn't expect to get stabbed in the face."

"How about you don't talk while I do this," Ben suggests. He unwraps a thin, cheap bar of hotel soap and scrubs his hands under the faucet. Then he peels open the wrapper of a set of butterfly bandages partway, then takes Eddie's hand and the washcloth away from his face.

Eddie's cheek looks a little swollen, but the wound seems to have stopped bleeding. Ben wets the corner of the washcloth and pats away the blood from where he'll need to put the bandage, going slowly and carefully, holding Eddie's chin in his other hand even though Eddie is staying perfectly still. Ben peels one of the bandages from the wrapper, then positions it carefully, and presses down as light as possible for it to adhere. "You might have to kind of mumble for a while, so you don't open up the inside," he says as he works. "Talk out of the other side of your mouth."

Eddie makes an affirmative sort of noise. Ben puts on the second bandage, even though the wound itself isn't all that long. "Okay," he murmurs. "That should hold well enough for you to hop in the

shower, and then I'll re-tape it if we have to, then tape some gauze over it so it stays clean."

"Will you stay in here while I shower?" Eddie asks, his eyes going nervously to the window.

"Sure, buddy," Ben says, not even having to think about it.

He helps Eddie out of his gross jacket and shirt so that Eddie doesn't accidentally bump his face getting undressed, then steps mostly out of the way so Eddie can get out of his jeans. The bathroom isn't large. There isn't really a place to go. He rolls up the gross clothes inside one of the bloody towels and sets the bundle on the closed toilet to find a garbage bag for or throw away later. Eddie turns the shower on and stands shivering as he waits for it to warm up. "I thought hotels were supposed to have unlimited hot water," Ben says. He takes off his overshirt just in case he has to help, and rolls up the sleeves of his henley. "Guess not this place."

Eddie huffs and rubs his hands briskly over his bare arms. He's lean, but not thin. He looks like he probably runs for exercise. Ben can picture that; a be-hoodied Eddie running in Central Park, his phone strapped to himself in case of emergency. Ben reaches around him and sticks his hand under the spray. "Good enough, I guess."

"Yeah, thanks," Eddie mutters. Ben holds out his arm for Eddie to grab onto to get into the bathtub, thinking not for the first time that this hotel's bathroom setup has got to be against the fire code, even for Derry. Then he thinks that there's probably no one who even checks, and has to swallow his slightly hysterical laugh. *Jesus*, Eddie got stabbed in the face and Ben's worried about the building codes.

Eddie closes the shower curtain, but only partway; Ben figures he wants to be able to see out. Ben moves the clothing bundle to underneath the sink and sits down. If he had to guess, it's been about thirty years since anyone tried to upgrade anything in this bathroom, if not longer.

"You okay?" he calls to Eddie after a few minutes.

"Yeah."

"Let me know if you need anything."

"Yeah." There's a pause, then Eddie's stiffly-muttered voice again. "Is there more soap out there?"

There's only the sliver Ben used to wash his hands. He peels it up off the cold ceramic of the sink and passes it to Eddie. The water's warmed up, Ben can see the steam.

"Ben?"

"Yeah?"

"Can you - would you help me?" Eddie's face appears around the curtain, looking concerned. "Not sure I can reach to get all this puke shit off my back." He makes an aborted, behind-him gesture with the washcloth he's got in hand.

"You got it." He doesn't ask what it's from, figuring Eddie's trip to the pharmacy in search of his token, and whatever surprise Pennywise sprung on him. What manifests and what doesn't is still baffling to Ben; he's mostly sure that the burning Pennywise pretending to be Beverly in his vision couldn't have hurt him physically, but he didn't want to find out.

Eddie's rinsed off, so whatever it was is mostly gone, if there was even any on his back to begin with. But Ben knows the feeling of needing to know you're clean, so he takes the washcloth and soap from Eddie's hands. He stands at the back of the bathtub, where he won't get too wet but Eddie can stay enough under the spray to keep warm. He works up a good lather on the material, then starts at Eddie's shoulders.

Eddie tenses up for a split second at the unfamiliar touch, his shoulders lifting up against Ben's palms.

"I got you," Ben murmurs. He digs his thumbs into the tense muscles at the base of Eddie's neck in an attempt to get him to relax, even just for a moment. "I got you," he says again.

Eddie groans and his head dips forward. Ben presses with his thumbs again, circling against soap-slick skin. He works downward by inches,

scrubbing with the washcloth. Eddie's arms move, his hands cupping under the water. "You warm enough?" Ben asks, pushing all his fingertips against Eddie's mid-back, feeling Eddie's ribs.

"Yeah - yeah." Eddie takes a deep breath, a palpable expansion of his lungs.

This would be so bizarre, Ben thinks, if everything in this town weren't so bizarre. If someone had told him three days ago... it's not even worth thinking about. He's wasting hot water, is what he's doing. He pauses to work soap into another round of lather, then rubs the washcloth down the dip of Eddie's spine. Eddie shivers. "Still okay?" Ben murmurs.

"You can - you can stop asking that anytime, really." Eddie puts a hand on the wall.

"I just want to be sure," Ben says, dropping the washcloth into the tub, then pressing with his thumbs on either side of Eddie's spine, his fingertips now digging into Eddie's waist. Eddie shivers again. Ben reaches around him to cup palmfuls of water that he slicks over the now-clean planes of Eddie's back. "I think we're good," he says carefully, not lifting his hands from Eddie's skin.

Eddie makes a choked-off sound as Ben slides his hand around, over his stomach, where the water is rolling down. "You still feel okay?" Ben asks, keeping his voice soft. "Not panicking? Does your face hurt a lot?"

"Could - could be worse," Eddie says, then hisses as Ben strokes his stomach again. Ben can see his shudder as well as feel it. "At least he missed all my teeth."

"Gotta look on the bright side." Somehow he says it breezily, even as he doesn't move his hand from where he's slowly sliding it downward. Adrenaline is starting to scream in his veins. "Eddie. Stop me if you don't want this."

"Want what?" Eddie asks, as his hips jerk and Ben looks over his shoulder, sees that Eddie's cock is hard. He curls his fingers around it. "Oh," Eddie breathes.

"Stop me if you don't want this," Ben repeats, stressing the first two words, because he wants Eddie to be sure. He's getting slightly damp now, water deflecting off Eddie's body onto his in a fine mist, and the entirety of his forearm and hand in the path of the spray as he touches Eddie gently.

Eddie shakes his head.

"No, you want me to stop, or no, you don't want me to stop." His heart is jackrabbiting in his chest. This is not at all the sort of thing he'd normally do. Ever. But everything about Eddie was screaming that he needed someone to do this, to give him a few minutes of bliss, even if it was under a shower in a fifty year-old bathtub with a curtain that looks like it was rejected from a third-rate hospital for being too institutional.

"Don't stop," Eddie whispers, so soft Ben wouldn't have heard it if his ear was any further from Eddie's mouth. His hand grips Ben's forearm.

"I won't," Ben promises. He firms his touch, stroking Eddie's cock fully and with confidence even though he's still nervous as hell. He's also hard, but his arousal is more of a background feeling, not insistent at all. All his focus is on where he's touching Eddie, the soft sounds Eddie is making that are nearly drowned out by the water. He keeps it slow, circling his thumb around the head on every upstroke, a part of him definitely enjoying every time Eddie shivers.

It doesn't take long at all.

Eddie lets out a short sort of sigh and hunches forward, before sliding down to sit on the floor of the bathtub. It's almost like his knees go out, in slow motion, as Ben tries not to let him hit his face against anything. "I'm going to shut the water off now," he says, once Eddie's all the way down, and Eddie nods.

Ben draws the curtain a little tighter so the steam can't all escape, then rinses his hand and turns off the tap. He glances at Eddie to see if he's freaking out, but Eddie's sitting with his eyes closed, his palms resting on his raised knees. He seems to be breathing evenly. Ben turns to grab some towels off the rack, then sits down on the closed

toilet to give Eddie a minute.

And to give himself a minute.

The steam in the rest of the bathroom has mostly dissipated by the time he hears Eddie say, "Ben?", and he answers, "I'm here."

Eddie pushes the curtain open slightly, peering through the gap. "Almost thought you left, dude."

"No, I wouldn't. Here," Ben murmurs, standing up. He drapes one of the towels around Eddie's shoulders. "All right, up, before it gets too cold in here."

He helps Eddie to his feet, then passes him the other towel to wrap around his waist. "If you sit on the bed, I'll bandage up your face for you."

Eddie nods and walks out of the bathroom, drying off his hair. Ben grabs the first aid kit again.

Eddie doesn't avoid his gaze or anything as Ben re-bandages his cheek, and he doesn't ask Ben to leave the room before he gets dressed. Ben sits on the bed and flaps his henley out from his body a few times, trying to dry out the dampness.

There's a soft knock on the door just as he's handing Eddie a pair of socks to borrow. "You guys okay, Eds, Ben?" Bev calls. "Does Eddie need an ambulance?"

Ben opens the door. "No, we're okay," he says to Bev's concerned face. "We got Eddie all cleaned up. It just took a while to get his face to stop bleeding."

"He didn't want to risk me bleeding out in the shower or whatever," Eddie adds. Mumbles out of one side of his mouth, really, since the swelling and all the tape hinders his jaw movement. He's putting the socks on, moving slowly. "I'm okay, Bev."

"I told him not to talk as much, but..." Ben shrugs. Bev stifles a smile. "Is anyone else back?"

"Not yet. And Richie's car is gone."

"Fuck." Ben rubs a hand over his eyes. "Great. What now?"

"I think we should meet Mike at the library like we promised."

Eddie's nodding. "Yeah," Ben says. "Library."

Author's Note:

PS: As someone who has written GenKill fic for years, I can't believe PJ is sort of famous now.